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ABSTRACT

Five methods for determining the needs and aspirations of the total library community (library personnel, library affiliates, and general population) in Illinois are presented in this report, and the use of three of them for a 3-phase study is outlined: (1) survey of the literature (documentary research and secondary data collection and analysis); (2) expert opinion, primarily the Delphi Technique; and (3) survey research, including what is generally called A1 & R (action, training, and research). The discussion of the project phases lists the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three methods and shows the logic that led to the final recommendations. Appended are the final report of the ad hoc committee on long range planning, a list of task force members, a selected bibliography of needs assessment studies, the agenda of the first task force meeting, the interim report submitted to the ILA executive board, results of the ERIC literature search, the survey letter sent to state associations, and a brief discussion of the five major methods used to determine needs. (JD)

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Report of ILA Task Force #1

on

THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE TOTAL LIBRARY COMMUNITY:

IDENTIFICATION MECHANISMS

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Andrew G. Torok

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

This final report has been prepared by Andrew G. Torok, Chairman of the Task Force, and approved by the Task Force at its meeting on October 18, 1979.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT 1

INTRODUCTION 1

THE GENERAL NATURE OF THE PROBLEM 2

METHODOLOGY 7

DISCUSSION OF PROJECT PHASES 9

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE 14

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 18

APPENDICES

Final Report of the ad hoc Committee on Long Range Planning . . . . . A

List of Task Force Members . . . . . B

Selected Bibliography of Needs Assessment Studies C

Agenda of the First Task Force Meeting . . . . . D

Interim Report Submitted to the ILA Executive Board . . . . . E

Results of the ERIC Literature Search . . . . . F

Survey Letter to State Associations . . . . . G

Major Methods for Determining Needs . . . . . H

FIGURES

TABLE 1. The Total Library Community 6

DIAGRAM A. Project A.C.E.: Identification Mechanisms for the Needs and Aspirations of the Total Library Community in Illinois 8

FINAL REPORT

Illinois Library Association, Task Force Group #1.

THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE TOTAL LIBRARY COMMUNITY: IDENTIFICATION MECHANISMS

ABSTRACT

In response to a charge given to ILA Task Force #1, a number of methods are presented for the identification of needs and aspirations of the total library community in Illinois. The discussion provides alternate points of view and the logic leading to the final recommendations. A mechanism for a three-phase study is outlined. Phase I consists of secondary data analysis, Phase II uses the Delphi technique, and Phase III employs survey research.

INTRODUCTION

In 1977 the Illinois Library Association (ILA) adopted a long-range plan, prepared by the ad hoc Committee on Long Range Planning, call the "Illinois Direction." The final report of the Committee is attached (Appendix A). Central to the planning process was the appointment of seven task force groups, each with a specific charge. The Program planning Subcommittee of the ILA Executive Board will consider the final reports of the task force groups and make final recommendations for action to the Executive Board.

This report summarizes both the planning and the results of the study performed by members of Task Force Group #1, hereafter referred to as "the Group". The Group was charged with the following:

> To study a variety of methods which ILA could use to identify needs and aspirations of the total library community with the ultimate purpose of assisting the community through ILA. The Task Force will produce a report describing the options considered, recommending one or more mechanisms and detailing the kinds of topics, questions, and research deemed necessary. The

> Task Force shall also suggest a time schedule for the use of recommended methods and attach an estimate of cost.

The six member Group (see Appendix B) was appointed by (then) ILA president Frank J. Dempsey and began its work on May 15, 1978 with a literature search, including an examination of major representative works in the areas of needs assessment and community analysis. These readings afforded the Group a basis for discussion in planning for the first meeting. Appendix C provides a brief annotated bibliography of needs assessment studies in the field of librarianship.

The first meeting of the Group was held on June 24, 1978. At this time Frank Dempsey acquainted the Group with the general nature of the "Illinois Direction". An analysis of the charge to the Group, a definition of terms, and a discussion of methodology were the main order of business, (see Appendix D for meeting agenda). The results of the first meeting were submitted as an interim report to the ILA Executive Board for consideration at its July 14, 1978 meeting, (Appendix E).

Consultant Services

The services of Alexander N. Pattakos, Assistant Director of the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, were secured for an evaluation of the final recommendations. The Center for Governmental Studies has a continuing history of public service activity in the area of community analysis and research.

THE GENERAL NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

In planning a course of action for executing the charge, the Group was

well aware of the problems associated with the development of library services to meet sometimes vague or unspecified needs. Needs assessment is an integral part of the planning process for library services, but what needs are of greatest concern for all types of libraries? How do the needs of individuals differ from those of agencies and institutions? More specifically, what should the role of ILA be in studying the needs and aspirations of the total library community? How can ILA's services benefit the various segments of the library community? With these questions in mind the Group's first task was to determine what others had done or were doing in the area of needs assessment. A manual search of Library Literature Index and three computer searches of the ERIC data base produced some interesting studies, but many of the studies were dated or felt to be or marginal value. Additional sources need to be examined to ensure a thorough search of the literature. Appendix C contains a reference to a bibliography on needs assessment studies. The search strategies and ERIC document numbers retrieved by the computer search are contained in Appendix F. A synthesis of the literature on needs assessment is a massive undertaking, thus it was not the Group's intent to summarize research on the subject. This can be performed effectively only if a narrow well-defined segment of the library community is being studied in great detail.

The most comprehensive studies to date in Illinois were those emanating from the regional and Illinois White House Conference on library and Information Services. The data generated by these activities need to be evaluated prior to any major assessment of need for segments of the library community. A number of other lesser studies for specific segments

of the library community in Illinois are readily identifiable in the literature. Many of these deal primarily with the continuing education needs of librarians.

The next task was to determine what ILA's counterparts in other states were doing in this area. Letters were sent to the fifty-six ALA chapters listed in the ALA Handbook of Organizations 1977/78. A copy of the letter is appended as Appendix G. Responses were received from sixteen state associations. Although only 29% of the associations responded, it can be assumed that many of them were deeply involved at that time in pre-White House Conference activities and that reports are now available. Based on the studies performed or in progress, no clear preference for a specific mechanism emerged. In general the mechanisms employed consisted of the following: (1) hiring a consultant(s) who prepared a final report based on available data; (2) specific charges carried out by task forces, with membership consisting of representatives from different types of libraries, other segments of the community, and consultant teams; (3) private research agencies conducting surveys of one or more segments of the community; (4) training of library personnel, who then conduct studies of selected segments of the library community with whom they interact; (5) regional and state conferences with representatives from different segments of the library community voicing their concerns; (6) self-administered studies of sub-groups within the state associations.

Definition of Terms

The concept of "need" has been extensively defined in the literature, thus it is not the purpose of this report to discuss the multitude of

approaches employed by various researchers. Studies of specific segments of the library community may find it beneficial to define need as it relates to a given segment. "Methodology" and "mechanism" are at times considered synonymously, but in the context of the charge to the Group "mechanism" is defined as a means of initiating and systematizing a study, and "methodology" refers to specific means or techniques employed within a given study, such as using the Delphi technique. ILA defines the library community to be "groups and individuals involved in the development, operations, and use of libraries of all kinds." For the Group's purpose, the definition was expanded to include librarians, support staff, trustees, directors, other governing bodies, friends of the library, the state library office, the library systems, all libraries, and the library public (both users and non-users). By this definition, various segments of the total community can be defined as needed, recognizing the fact that an individual may belong to several segments. Thus research is needed to study conflicting needs and the motivating forces governing membership in organizations. "Community" is not limited to geographic considerations and may include groups organized for a common purpose.

Segments of the Library Community

The total library community has been stratified into three primary segments and sub-divided further by membership in ILA. This latter division permits focus on ILA's role in assisting the library community. For example, ILA's organizational needs could be studied in terms of minimizing non-renewals, or increasing the membership. Additional concerns might be the need for better communication and feedback, all of which ultimately could be of

benefit to the library community. Table 1 identifies three levels within the library community and corresponding segments.

TABLE 1

THE TOTAL LIBRARY COMMUNITY

	ILA COMMUNITY	NON-ILA COMMUNITY
LEVEL I: LIBRARY PERSONNEL	Segment A	Segment B
Professional Librarians Library Associates Library Technical Assistants Other Support Staff Etc.		
LEVEL II: LIBRARY AFFILIATES	Segment C	Segment D
Governing Bodies Boards of Directors Library Trustees Friends of the Library Library Volunteers Library Committees (as in Special Libraries) Etc.		
LEVEL III: GENERAL POPULATION (all others)	Segment E	Segment F
Minority Groups Institutionalized Handicapped Protected Classes Served and Unserved Legislators Etc.		

The segments in Table 1 are intended only as a guide and should not be considered the only alternative. Major divisions of the library community can be defined in terms of users/non-users, types of libraries, professional associations, administrative structure, geographic parameters, sharing of similiar needs, or some manner most suited for a given study. Each level and segment can also be further sub-divided. Library Personnel (level I) can be divided into professionals, support staff, employed and unemployed, etc; Library Affiliates (level II) can be divided into trustees, boards of directors, friends of the library, governing bodies, library committees, etc.; and the General Population can be segmented as shown and withing segments various groups can be further defined. Segment E may even be non-existent since no-one in this level may have an ILA membership.

Task force Group #1 sees the need to establish priorities which determine the order and manner in which the needs and aspirations of various segments of the library community can be identified. A study of all segments is a massive undertaking. Therefore, priority should be given to studies of those segments supporting the mission of ILA and perhaps provide them with mechanisms by which, in turn, they can identify the needs of other segments of the library community. The following section outlines several possible methodologies and presents a mechanism for studying the needs of the library community in Illinois.

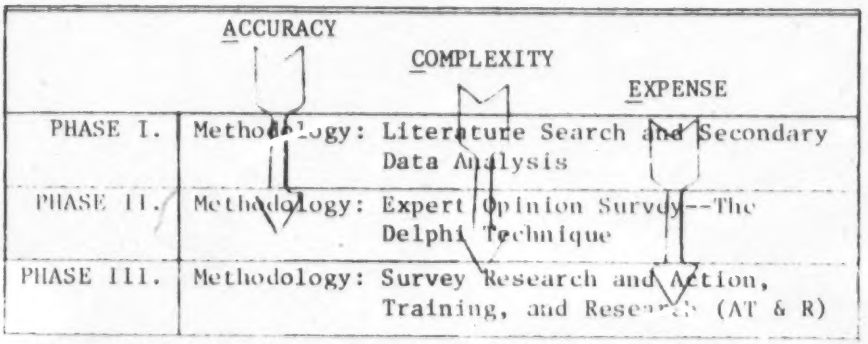
METHODOLOGY

Five major methods for determining the needs and aspirations of the total library community are: (1) Survey of the literature (documentary data analysis); (2) Observation; (3) Experiment; (4) Expert opinion (the Delphi

Technique); and (5) Survey research. Appendix H (attached) provides a discussion of each method. Most needs assessment literature and experiences indicate that a multifaceted approach is critical for reliable assessment of need. The following mechanism relies primarily on three of the five methods mentioned above. These are, in increasing order of accuracy, complexity, and expense: (1) Survey of the literature (documentary research and secondary data collection and analysis); (2) Expert opinion, primarily the Delphi Technique; and (3) Survey research, including what is generally termed AT & R (Action, Training, and Research). In addition, some segments of the community may lend themselves to observation, using site visits, case studies, and other techniques. Task Force #1 recommends a stepwise implementation of these three methods, each phase reinforcing the subsequent step. To reflect the variation in resources needed to accomplish each phase, and the specificity of the expected results, the study has been dubbed "Project ACE" (Accuracy, Complexity, and Expense). Diagram A illustrates the nature of Project ACE.

DIAGRAM A

PROJECT A.C.E.: IDENTIFICATION MECHANISMS FOR THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE TOTAL LIBRARY COMMUNITY IN ILLINOIS



With the execution of each Phase a more detailed comprehension of needs is gained, but only by a greater expenditure of funds, development of more complex methodologies, and an increase in the time needed to finish a study.

DISCUSSION OF PROJECT PHASES

Phase I. Secondary Data Analysis

Phase I analyzes data drawn from recent needs assessment studies dealing with one or more segments of the broadly defined library community. The availability of data makes it possible to study many segments of the community, although measures of need may not be standardized across several studies. Data sources should include but not be limited to: (1) Census data for information on social indicators such as educational level, population shifts, and other variables deemed significant; (2) Studies completed within the last two years from the beginning of Phase I, by other professional associations and their subgroups; (3) Studies performed within Illinois in the past five years, in particular the regional conferences and the Illinois White House Conference on Library and Information Services; (4) Other studies drawn from the literature that are deemed relevant. This Phase will develop a conceptual framework for such studies, provide definitions of terms and suggest additional methodologies. Specifically, it will: (1) Develop a classification for segments of the library community; (2) Identify those segments for which additional needs studies are necessary; (3) Specify variables of greatest importance in needs studies; (4) Summarize the needs of various segments within Illinois for which data is available; (5) Suggest services and programs within ILA's domain to meet the needs of its members, and other segments of the community.

The major advantage of Phase I is that several recent studies are available for analysis. Many of these studies, within Illinois and other states, were prepared for the White House Conference on Library and Information Services or for long-range programs on library development. The major shortcomings of Phase I are that it only indirectly identifies the needs of the Illinois library community, by inferring that the needs of library communities in other states are in some way similiar to those in Illinois, and information is limited to what is available in the literature. Some advantages and disadvantages are listed below.

Advantages of Phase I.

1. Current data are available
2. The method is relatively inexpensive and does not require the tremendous outlay of resources characterized by empirical studies
3. Provides a basis for comparative analysis with other library communities
4. May offer a time dimension not available with other methods, e.g. documentary trends, growth, etc.
5. It is a prerequisite for other more refined and comprehensive methods
6. Topics, areas of research, research agencies, and questions deemed necessary will be identified
7. It can be implemented quickly and requires comparatively little time to complete
8. More segments of the library community can be studies than otherwise feasible
9. Reliance on consultants is minimal, thus the study can be handled internally (within ILA).

Disadvantages of Phase I.

1. Generalization to the entire library community is more risky than with "randomized" design
2. Lack of control--of design, data collection, management of data, etc.
3. Many of the studies do not deal specifically with Illinois
4. Impact of findings may be uncertain

5. Does not provide a mechanism for continuing identification of needs
6. Studies do not clarify the relationship between needs of various segments of the library community and services provided to meet these needs
7. Documentation for the studies does not always identify weaknesses and compromises that may lead to questionable results
8. Needs of the Illinois library community may in fact differ from those of other states. Thus the studies may not have the same purposes.
9. Costs of certain methodologies may not be readily identified.

Phase II. Expert Opinion Survey--the Delphi Technique

In this phase, experts representing various segments of the library community are polled on their perceptions of the needs and aspirations of the general population. The polling process is repeated until concensus is reached on major issues of concern. This technique is particularly useful in forecasting trends or obtaining information on needs for which data are difficult to obtain. An example of a method for implementing the Delphi Technique is the concensus development conference, used frequently by the National Institute of Health (NIH), and other agencies. At NIH, concensus development conferences bring together biomedical research scientists, practicing physicians, consumers, and others as appropriate, in an effort to reach general agreement on the safety and efficicy of a medical technology. The methodology consists of a number of position papers being read, response from a panel, general discussion by the audience, followed by an analysis by the panel and other invited conference participants. The conclusions represent the general concensus that was reached.

Advantages of Phase II.

1. Less expensive than a survey of the general population

2. Can be tailored to the needs of a specific segment
3. Better control of methodology than in Phase I
4. Results can be generalized to the entire library community
5. Results are more current and representative of the Illinois community than Phase I
6. Provides a mechanism for continuing identification of needs
7. Specific need, e.g. those of ILA, can be included in the discussion
8. Surveys the individuals most likely to influence change.

Disadvantages of Phase II.

1. More expensive than Phase I
2. More time consuming
3. Problem in agreeing on who the experts are and obtaining their cooperation
4. Need for a consultant(s)
5. Technique may be too general for practical applications, such as the development of library services. There may be a loss of specificity in the process of arriving at a consensus
6. Duplication of effort if applied to various segments separately.

Since Phase II is more complex to administer and more expensive than Phase I, it should be applied only to those segments of the library community for which results in Phase I were considered inadequate. Since the Illinois White House Conference resembled a Phase II methodology, an evaluation of the results may show that a Phase II study is not necessary for many segments. On the other hand, if policy makers feel that the needs of a given segment have not been articulated, a Phase II type study should be considered as soon as possible. In order to be successful, specific objectives need to be formulated for a well defined segment before opinion survey can begin. Phase I may provide at least a partial list of questions that need to be addressed by position papers, and thus serve to expedite the process.

Other methodologies suggest themselves for a Phase II study, particularly if

results are needed quickly and financial resources are limited. One could perform a "quick and dirty" mail or telephone "key informant" survey. No concensus is necessary under this arrangement. The specific methodology can be designed with the aid of a consultant and a Request For Proposals (RFPs) sent to research agencies. A preliminary investigation by members of the Group indicates that this is a suitable methodology for studying ILA's needs.

Phase III. Survey Research

Phase III involves a survey of the base population of one or more segments of the library community. Although one generally works with only a sample drawn from a population, a survey of this type is the most comprehensive of the three phases. Conceivably, then, this would also be the most accurate and presumably reliable in assessing needs. It is also the most time consuming, complex and expensive. Studies of this type have been sparse in Illinois, although many librarians at one time or another have conducted surveys of users or non-users. Because of parochial concerns and/or lack of documentation, coordination of results has been difficult and these studies have not been useful for continuing assessments of needs. In addition, personnel undertaking studies of this type have generally lacked the training or funding to be successful. The ideal situation would be to train community representatives to perform the studies themselves, thus providing a mechanism for continuing assessment of need. This problem-solving, capacity-building approach is generally termed Action Training and Research (AT & R). Librarians at the local level are already in a position to assess needs of the general public, given the proper training.

Advantages of Phase III.

1. May provide the most reliable results of the three phases
2. Permits a wider generalization of the findings if done properly
3. Generates a data base for subsequent comparative analysis in later time periods
4. Provides a mechanism for continuing identification of needs
5. Allows greater involvement and mode for expression of the individual.

Disadvantages of Phase III.

1. More time consuming than the other phases since more planning is necessary, data gathering and analysis will take longer, and to some extent cannot be implemented before a Phase I type investigation
2. More complex, because instruments need to be developed and pre-tested, administration of questionnaires (data gathering) is more complex even with telephone interviews, and results need to be evaluated
3. All of the above contribute to the expense, but in general, Phase III involves more personnel, the single most expensive component.

Although not necessarily a disadvantage, Phase III requires the use of consultants and research groups to either train persons to conduct their own studies or to perform the actual study. Consultants may bring a degree of objectivity not other wise possible and free the library personnel for performing their duties. The real problem is to secure funding and to provide librarians or others the time necessary for conducting a needs assessment. In general, only selected segments of Level III would be considered for a Phase III study, based on the findings of Phase I approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE

Recommendation #1.

The Illinois Library Association will appoint a Task Force to implement Phase I as described. The formation and activities of the Task Force shall

be publicized to aid in selecting members, and to permit interested individuals to attend meetings as participant observers. Membership is left to the discretion of ILA, but will normally include representation from all types of libraries, the State library, a library educator, and others in a position to contribute knowledge and services. A liason person will be appointed to facilitate communication between the Task Force and appropriate ILA bodies.

Resources to be provided by ILA shall include: (1) travel allowance; (2) telephone and other communication charges; (3) literature search and document acquisition charges; (4) data processing costs; (5) photoduplication charges; (6) secretarial services; (7) office supplies and other resources deemed necessary. The time frame for this study will be twelve months, beginning at the time the Task Force holds its first meeting. Associated costs will be in the range of $1,500.00 to $2,000.00. The figures do not represent personnel costs and assume some services, e.g. typing, will in-part be contributed by the ILA office. The sale of an edited and formally-published version of the Task Force's final report will help to recover expenses.

Recommendation #2.

A Delphi study of segments in Level I and II shall be initiated by ILA. ILA will issue a request for proposals from individuals and research centers to implement Phase II for selected segments withing the Illinois library community. Since this method normally involves nominal and interactive group techniques, a consultant will be required. It is important that the role of the consultant be articulated. Elaboration of

the specific methodology should be left to the discretion of the appropriate bodies charged with the study. A suggested mechanism would be to have ILA sponsor a concensus development conference as a pre- or post-ILA Annual Conference activity for 1980.

Phase I and the reports of other task forces associated with Illinois Direction, should, for the most part, determine the questions that need to be asked and the segments that need to be studied. However, work on recommendation #2 should begin immediately with a request for proposals and search for external funding. A liason person should be appointed to coordinate, or at least monitor, the activities of the two Phases. The suggested time frame for a limited study is twelve months, and expenses shall range from $5,000.00 to $7,500.00.

Recommendation #3.

Recommendation #3 consists of a full survey of the ILA membership, and a randomized sampling of segments within B and D in Table 1. The specific topics and segments to be studies can be determined by the completion of the second recommendation. Implementation of the first recommendation is a prerequisite to the initiation of a full survey. The mechanism will normally include the use of consultants, research teams, liason persons, and a reactor committee to evaluate the results.

A mechanism already exists to perform this study in the form of association membership lists, library systems in Illinois, and related studies which have set a precedence for work in this area. Depending on a specific methodology and number of segments studied, costs can range

from $7,500.00 to $20,000.00. A request for proposals should identify specific costs and methodologies. A not-for-profit research organization is recommended to minimize the expenses.

Recommendation #4.

The feasibility of an AT & R approach should be investigated to study the needs of segments within E & F from Table 1. Since many of the studies to date have been concerned with these segments, it is conceivable that not all segments need to be studied. Thus, individuals in contact with these segments should be trained to conduct needs assessment studies for those segments for which additional data is needed. A task force group similiar to that proposed in the first recommendation, but including representation from the segments to be studied, should act as a liason agency between ILA and research groups interested in submitting proposals.

Workshops to train individuals to conduct needs assessment studies can range from $15,000.00 to $20,000.00. In addition, funding and a commitment from local groups are needed to realize the implementation of such training. An alternate means of gathering data about the general population on a continuing basis is via the U.S. Census. Given that the appropriate variables can be identified, ILA should investigate the feasibility of including questions in the U.S. Census. This long-range objective may provide a continuing assessment of need not achievable in other ways. The work performed by other groups with regard to the above recommendation should be evaluated in terms of possible application to the library community in Illinois. An ILA appointed task force working with a consultant can investigate the feasibility of this recommendation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A number of methods for identification of needs and aspirations have been discussed. The recommendations rely on the assumption that not all segments of the library community require empirical studies to identify needs. A three phase mechanism has been presented to study the needs of the total library community in Illinois. A stepwise implementation of three phases identifies those segments for which data are available and provides a means for studying additional segments or topics of concern.

The methods recommended for each phase are not fixed. A hybrid study incorporating a variety of techniques may be deemed more desirable in order to study a particular segment(s) or obtain data on specific topics. A multifaceted study of sub-groups within ILA might include a mix of observation, opinion, and survey, using site visits, case studies, key informed approaches, and telephone survey techniques. Population samples can be clustered to save money and stratification employed to reduce variance. However, the use of a consultant and/or research team is advised for any study progressing beyond Phase I.

In order to develop a successful mechanism for continuing assessment of need, it is important that ILA do the following: (1) Develop clearly defined objectives and associated parameters for serving the library community; (2) Identify those segments of the library community of interest to ILA and for whom it can be of greatest service: (3) Identify and develop sources of funding for a continuing assessment of need; (4) Maintain contact with related agencies, in Illinois and other states, engaged in similar activities; (5) Develop a file of readily accessible materials

pertaining to needs assessment in Illinois, and publicize and be willing to share these materials with other agencies; (6) Develop a mechanism by which ILA can respond quickly to perceived needs, or by which inquiries can be referred to the appropriate bodies for action.

Task Force Group #1 cannot recommend a "best" mechanism for continuing assessment of need since the changing natures of needs and communities require that mechanisms remain flexible. Recognizing, as well, that other variables, such as limited resources, time, and temperment effect the choice of a mechanism, the Group has attempted to be realistic by presenting a stepwise plan of action which can be implemented to the extent needed for a particular purpose. The choice of purpose remains for the policy makers.

The most valuable approach is one that lends continuity and simplifies the process. The bases for simplification and continuity reside in good records management and open channels of communication which are sensitive to the needs of the individual, yet tempered by concern for the majority. ILA has progressed in this direction through the automation of its records, its multitude of programs, and awareness of problems through activities such as the "Illinois Direction." A commitment to a cause must be tempered by action, and action must lead to progress in order for the cause to succeed. The commitment is often cheap but the action is often costly and demands sacrifice. Implicit to a course of action is the development of future programs perceived as meeting the needs of the library community. The community in turn must also be responsive since services are never free. In addition, a system of education must be incorporated into services designed to meet the needs of a segment of the community.

It now remains for the Program Planning Sub-committee, the ILA Executive Board, and ultimately the membership, to determine the extent to which the recommendations will be implemented.

Respectfully submitted ILA Task Force Group #1:

Andrew G. Torok - Sycamore, Chairperson
Robert Lyons - Hoffman Estates
Carol Rickert - Barrington
Kathleen Rummel - Chicago
Kenneth Swanson - Chicago
Valerie Wilford - Bloomington

(Note: Additional documentation for the statements presented in this report may be obtained by writing to the Chairperson of Task Force Group #1: Dr. Andrew G. Torok, Department of Library Science, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois 60115.)

the illinois direction

Final Report of the ad hoc Committee on Long-Range Planning Illinois Library Association

PURPOSES OF THE ASSOCIATION

The purposes of the Illinois Library Association are to serve as a democratic agency for the development and pursuit of the commitments and ideals of the library community* in Illinois, and to provide the coordinating framework for the various units into which the association is organized.

*Library community includes groups and individuals involved in the development, operation, and use of libraries of all kinds.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal I. To identify and respond to the needs and aspirations of various segments of the library community.

A. To develop a mechanism for identifying needs and aspirations of the library community.
   1. In 1978 the president will appoint a task force to examine and recommend methods useful in the continuing identification of needs and aspirations of the total library community in Illinois. The task force will report its findings to the Executive Board by March 1979.
   2. In 1978 the Executive Board will provide opportunities for members, former members, and nonmembers to express their needs and aspirations. For example: the *ILA Reporter* should solicit opinion, offer space for letters to the editor, and develop substantive articles. The annual conference format should also be examined for such opportunities, and such devices as direct membership liaison with individual Executive Board members should be explored.

B. To provide a response to perceived needs and aspirations.
   1. The Executive Board agenda shall, in 1978, allow time for discussion of needs and aspirations currently perceived. Responses should be provided through the *ILA Reporter,* the annual conference, continuing education, etc.
   2. In 1979 the Executive Board shall select and begin implementation of the recommendations of the task force described in item IA1.

C. To evaluate the structure of the association for its ability to facilitate achievement of this goal.
   1. Periodically, and no less often than every three years, the Executive Board shall evaluate the charges, functions, size, and composition of all ILA committees and issue a report.
   2. In 1980, or at the completion of the task force's recommended work, the Executive Board shall evaluate the structure of the association and issue a report, with recommendations, to the membership.

D. To place responsibility upon the ILA units (sections, committees, round tables) to plan and program to meet the needs of their constituencies.

Goal II. To provide a forum in which to determine positions on issues of importance and concern to the library community.

A. To elicit expressions of ideas and concerns on issues of importance to the library community and to individual association members.
   1. In 1978 the Executive Board shall provide multiple opportunities for the identification of issues and concerns.

B. To devise procedures for arriving at positions on issues of importance and to formulate policy statements on these positions.
   1. In 1978 the Executive Board shall create a task force which will devise specific procedures for arriving at positions on various types of issues and concerns. The task force will report its findings to the Executive Board by March 1979.

Goal III. To serve as a spokesman in expressing the concerns and positions of the association's units and its members.

A. To speak for the library community to the media, the public, and government.
   1. The Executive Office shall maintain a comprehensive media mailing list for the distribution of news releases of general interest.

*Reproduced from Illinois Libraries, February, 1978.

2. In 1978, and thereafter, the Executive Office shall issue general interest news releases when appropriate.
3. In 1978 the Executive Office will develop a format and procedure for the issuance of news releases to appropriate media upon the election of an association officer, the election of a section president, the appointment of a committee chairperson, or the official honoring of an association member.
4. In 1978 the Executive Office will assemble material on positions taken by the association, develop a method of keeping this material current, and develop a method of disseminating this material to appropriate units of government.
5. By 1979 the Executive Board and the Public Relations and Publicity Committee shall develop a master media plan to include regular use of television, radio, the press, and other media sources.
6. By 1980 the Executive Board shall identify, train, supply information materials, and seek speaking opportunities for those who officially represent the association.

B. To promote legislative positions adopted by the association.
1. The Executive Board, by the end of 1978, shall perfect the structure of the ILA Legislative Network.
2. By 1979 the Executive Office shall include in its media plan emphasis on promotion of the legislative platform.
3. In 1978, and thereafter, ILA shall continue support of the position of legislative liaison.
4. By 1979 the Executive Board and the Legislative-Library Development Committee shall plan for greater communication with government officials at the local, state, and national levels to build understanding and support of libraries.

C. To respond to challenges to principles espoused by the association.
1. Immediately, the Executive Board shall publicize to the membership and others of the library community the current available remedies for problems in this area.
2. In 1978 the president will appoint a task force to recommend procedures for ILA to deal with various types of challenges to principles espoused by the association. The task force will report its findings to the Executive Board by March 1979.
3. In 1979 the Executive Board will arrange for educational opportunities for those vulnerable to challenge.
4. The Executive Board will, by 1980, develop policy statements and suggestions for guidance in problem areas and for adoption as local policy.

Goal IV. To facilitate communication within the association.

A. To provide the Executive Office with the capacity to issue timely and substantive communications.
1. In 1978 the Executive Board shall provide for issuing the *ILA Reporter* on a monthly basis and in a format sufficient to communicate information to the membership. The Executive Board, in 1978, shall appoint an advisory committee to the *ILA Reporter* and provide for annual evaluation.
2. In 1979 the Executive Board shall encourage units that distribute publications to coordinate and/or incorporate their publications with the *ILA Reporter.*
3. In 1979 the Executive Board shall study the relationship of ILA publications and *Illinois Libraries* (a publication of the Illinois State Library).

B. To encourage interaction among the various association units.
1. In 1978 the governing boards of each section shall appoint one of its members as a liaison with each section of ILA where there is determined to be a common area of interest.
2. By 1979 the editor of the *ILA Reporter* shall develop a plan for requiring, and for using, regular reporting of unit activities on a timely basis.
3. In 1978, and thereafter, all units of the association should consider the joint planning and mutual notification of programs in areas of common concern.

C. To promote better understanding of association goals, programs, policies, and actions among the membership.
   1. In 1978 the president shall appoint a task force to assemble existing policies, review their adequacy, identify gaps, and recommend new policies. The task force will report its findings to the Executive Board by July 1979.
   2. By 1980 the Executive Board shall provide a handbook for ILA members.
   3. In 1979, and thereafter, the Executive Board shall provide for an annual membership directory.

D. To foster communication between the association's units, the Executive Board, and the Executive Office.
   1. In 1978, and thereafter, each unit shall be expected to prepare adequate and frequent reports of its activities for Executive Board information.
   2. In 1978 the Executive Board should reexamine the frequency and format of its meetings and the meetings of the ILA units. Consideration should be given to: the coordination of meetings to facilitate reporting, decision making, and economy; continuation of annual Executive Board planning sessions; and experimentation with a multi-day meeting of various units culminating in an Executive Board meeting.
   3. In 1978 the president shall appoint a task force to consider regional ILA representation. The task force will report its findings to the membership at the 1978 conference.

Goal V. To encourage maximum involvement of members in association activities.

A. To generate policies on committee composition and terms of office which contribute to involvement by a maximum number of members.
   1. The Executive Board, by 1979, shall establish a policy on ILA committee membership and terms of office that includes consideration of: a limit on the number of years of service on a committee; geographical representation; a requirement that newer members (to be defined in terms of age, entry into the association, etc.) be named to committees; devices to insure that opportunities are diffused; and a deadline for the appointment of committees.

B. To increase effectiveness of individual participation in association activities.
   1. In 1979 the president shall appoint the at-large Executive Board members to serve as a special committee to study ways to increase the effectiveness of member participation. Items to be considered should include: a talent file on all members who are willing and able to serve the association; creating positive opportunities for volunteer activity; a session at the annual conference designed to assist interested members in finding an appropriate niche in the association; better description of unit activities and plans to attract those with special abilities and interests; and opportunities for comments from the membership on association and unit plans and projects.

C. To produce explicit plans for involving newer members in association activities.
   1. In 1978 the president shall request the Junior Members Round Table to develop a plan to increase involvement of all new members of the association. JMRT should consider: designing a membership kit for new members; regional meetings to introduce new members to the association; ways for JMRT to interact with other units; getting input from newer members on various projects as they are planned and implemented; and planning special programs and/or days for newer members at the annual conference.

D. To explore ways to utilize the talents and experience of members who have served in leadership positions.
   1. In 1978 the president shall appoint a task force to examine and recommend ways to sustain association involvement by members who have served in leadership positions. The task force will report its findings to the Executive Board by March 1979. Among ideas the task force should consider are: creating a unit within ILA to attract experienced members to carry out special assignments; naming advisors to certain committees and units to utilize

help from the experienced; using past leadership as instructors in training sessions for new leadership; asking skilled leadership to work on special projects; and using skilled and experienced persons in a continuing function: e.g., lobbying with the legislature, recodification of library law, liaisons with outside groups, etc.

E. To plan conference programs which recognize the broad needs of the total membership and encourage attendance.

1. In 1978 the president shall appoint a conference advisory committee, with staggered terms, to facilitate long-range conference planning. Among ideas the committee should consider are: soliciting more membership input into the conference planning process; finding out why many members do not or cannot attend the annual conference and make plans for changes as are needed; monitoring content of conferences so that topics are of high interest and schedules make good use of time; regional meetings — both multi-state and regions within the state — as a periodic alternate to the annual state conference; sequential planning of conference programs; and communication of conference events and content to non-attendees.

F. To insure that unit programs and workshops are high in quality and meet identified needs of the membership.

1. The Continuing Education for Librarianship Committee shall develop, by 1979, guidelines for workshops and other continuing education activities. Upon completion of the guidelines the committee may serve in an advisory capacity to all units of the association.

G. To reach and recruit an expanded membership, both personal and institutional.

1. In 1978 the Executive Board will provide the Membership Committee and the Executive Office with sufficient resources to review the adequacy of current membership policies and, in 1979, to conduct an intensive campaign for increasing the association's membership. Ideas the committee might consider are: learning successful membership recruiting techniques from other associations; exploring the implications of a joint ALA-ILA membership; offering prospective members a better explanation of what ILA does and how it spends its funds; establishing a "Friends of ILA" and seek public memberships; analyzing institutional membership, developing a service pattern for institutions, and preparing a list of non-library institutions which might join; using many ways to contact possible members — including the regional approach, one-on-one assignments, etc.; and striving to keep dues in line.

Goal VI. To promote interaction with individuals and groups outside the association who share mutual concerns.

A. To develop direct relationships with individuals and groups having mutual concerns.

B. To share information with outside groups.

C. To develop services to outside groups.

D. To seek assistance in building support for libraries.

1. In 1979 the president shall appoint a task force to deal with the above four areas and make recommendations to the Executive Board. The task force will issue its report by June 1980.

REVISION PROCESS

The Executive Board shall annually designate substantial time at one or more meetings to evaluate the year's accomplishments in relation to the ILA Plan, set priorities for the coming year, and consider new objectives to meet the needs expressed by the membership.

Respectfully submitted ILA ad hoc Long-Range Planning Committee:

James A. Ubel, Carbondale, Chairperson
Mary Clark, Aurora
Beth Hamilton, Hinsdale
Bridget Lamont, Springfield
Bryant Jackson, Normal
Alice Ihrig, Oak Lawn
Joan E. Van Nord, Urbana

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Task Force #1

Kathleen Rummel	Library Consultant	521 W. Roscoe Chicago, IL 60657 (312) 549-2880
Valerie Wilford	Information Science Dept. Illinois State University Normal, IL 61761	1110 E. Jefferson #19 Bloomington, IL 61701 (309) 829-4693
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Robert Lyons	Board of Library Directors Schaumburg Public Library (312) 882-8000	1025 Hermitage Lane Hoffman Estates, IL 60195
Andrew G. Torok Chair	Dept. of Library Science Northern Illinois University DeKalb, IL 60115 (815) 753-0522	405 S. Main Street Sycamore, IL 60178 (815) 895-6271

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDIES IN THE FIELD OF LIBRARIANSHIP

Dervin, Brenda, and others. The Development of Strategies for Dealing with the Information Needs of Urban Residents. Phase I -- Citizen Study Final Report, 1976 (ERIC ED125640). Phase II -- Information Practitioner Study, 1977 (ERIC ED136791)

"The emphasis on this multi-phase project is on the HOW (how to develop strategies for serving the information needs of clients) rather than on the WHAT (what are the topic contents of information needs potential clients may have)." The first phase of this project does look closely at information needs but is more concerned with the information seeking strategies of the people. The second phase is mainly concerned with the awareness and abilities of information professionals to deal adequately with their clientele.

Final Report of the Task Force on Library Manpower and Education to the Council on Library Development, 1975 (ERIC ED112902).

This report describes the task force's efforts to study library manpower and education needs and resources in Wisconsin. The study was concerned with personnel at all levels and in all types of libraries, and utilized two questionnaires and an interview schedule for data gathering.

Ladd, Boyd. National Inventory of Library Needs, 1975. Resources Needed for Public and Academic Libraries and Public School Library/Media Centers, 1974 (ERIC ED139381).

"This report presents a broad assessment of the status and performance of United States libraries to guide library planning, technical development, and program formulation. Nationally representative data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Libraries General Information Surveys (LIBGIS) Program is given in tables for library resources. Included are staff, collections, space, operating expenditures, acquisitions, and service hours available to school, academic, and public libraries in comparison with indicators of need developed by professionals."

Marshall, Chris E., comp. Needs Assessment for Social Planning: Ideas and Approaches. (Council of Planning Libraries Exchange Bibliography 1442) January 1978.

Contains a very up-to-date bibliography of needs assessment studies, mainly on the needs of specialized populations.

Minor, Barbara B., comp. Institute on Developing Dynamic Public Library Services Responsive to Community Needs. Final Narrative Report, 1976. (ERIC ED126947).

This summary of a conference for small and medium size public library personnel describes the results of the three phases of the conference which were based on acquisition and application of skills in community analysis, evaluation of library resources, and development of programs to staisfy community needs.

Totterdell, Barry, and Bird, Jean. The Effective Library: Report of the Hillingdon Project on Public Library Effectiveness. London: The Library Association, 1976.

The entire study is of interest for its strong theoretical framework and excellent explanations for the researchers' choice of the methodologies which they employed. Only a small part of this study is concerned with needs assessment. Chapter 5, which deals with the exploration of community needs, is particularly pertinent.

Warner, Edward S., Murray, Ann D., and Palmour, Vernon E. Information Needs of Urban Residents. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Office of Education, Bureau of Libraries and Learning Resources, 1973. (ERIC ED088464)

"This report reflects...the development and testing of methodology for measuring, as well as the determination and analysis of, information needs, information-seeking strategies, and search outcomes of residents in urban areas." Warner, et al., do an interesting study of the abilities of selected library based Information and Referral centers to fulfill selected information needs.

ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

TASK FORCE #1

Charge: This task force will study a variety of methods which ILA could use to identify needs and aspirations of the total library community with the ultimate purpose of assisting the community through ILA.

Product: The task force will produce a report describing the options considered, recommending one or more mechanisms and detailing the kinds of topics, questions, and research deemed necessary. The task force shall also suggest a time schedule for the use of the recommended methods and attach an estimate of cost.

First Meeting

June 24, 1978

AGENDA

Keeping in mind both the charge to Task Force #1 and the report which we will eventually produce, our first meeting should include some basic considerations which are germane to our work.

I. Definitions
   - A. The total library community
   - B. Needs and aspirations
   - C. Other

II. Methods to be Considered
   - A. Delphi technique
   - B. Document examination
   - C. Experiment
   - D. Observation
   - E. Survey
   - F. Other

III. Aspects of the Identification of Needs and Aspirations
   - A. Population to be studied
   - B. Kinds of needs to be studied
     1. substantively -- the subject areas of needs
     2. types of needs
        - a. actual and potential
        - b. expressed and unexpressed
        - c. felt and unfelt
   - C. Geographic area to be studied -- including the type of community
   - D. Time factors to be considered
     1. immediate needs
     2. long range needs.
   - E. Other

INTERIM REPORT TO THE ILA EXECUTIVE BOARD, JULY 14-15, 1978

ILA Task Force #1: "The Needs and Aspirations of the Total Library Community: Identification Mechanisms"

Members:		
	Andrew Torok, Chairperson	Northern Illinois Univefsity
	Robert Lyons	Schaumberg Public Library
	Carol Rickert	Mount Prospect Public Library
	Kathleen Rummel	Library Consultant
	Kenneth Swanson	Indian Trails Library District
	Valerie Wilford	Illinois State Library

Charge: This task force will study a variety of methods which ILA could use to identify needs and aspirations of the total library community with the ultimate purpose of assisting the community through ILA.

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Since the Executive Board will be directing its attention to such informal mechanisms as letters to the editor of the ILA Reporter, Task Force #1 will concentrate on formalized methods for identifying needs and aspirations of the total library community. To this end, a selective annotated bibliography of major needs assessment studies in librarianship has been compiled.(enclosure #1).and the Task Force is presently gathering information on specific studies performed in Illinois and other states by various individuals, library associations, state agencies, and other bodies. These will serve as a basis for identifying the general mat re of information needs research, methodology and instruments.

A broad interpretation of the "total library community" includes all librarians, library workers, trustees, directors, friends of the library, the State office, the Systems, libraries,(both public and private), and the public (both users and non-users). A more restrictive interpretation of the "total library community" limits the definition to those members of the above who are associated with the ILA.

Task Force #1 sees the need to identify a system of priorities which will determine the orderiin which various segments of the total library community will be studied. Dependent on socio-economic variables, time lines, and other factors, a number of relatively independent studies can cumulate into a comprehensive identification of the needs and aspirations of the total library community.as defined in the broader sense. Furthermore, these priorities will to a great extent determine the methodologies to be examined.

Definition of the Total Library Community

A 3x2 contingency table can serve as a model for identifying the sub-sets or segments of the total library community in the bread sense:

	ILA Members	Non-ILA Members
Library Personnel	A	B
Library Affiliates	C	D
General Population (other)	E	F

The total library community can be considered to be divided into those people directly associated with libraries, i.e., gainfully employed in library work, those affiliated with libraries in other ways, and those not associated with the operation of libraries. Each of these three groups can be subdivided into those who belong to ILA and those who do not belong to ILA. Thus A represents librarians, library technical assistants, etc., who are members of ILA. B represents librarians, et al., who do not now belong to ILA. C includes trustees, members of boards of directors, friends of the library, etc., who belong to ILA. D includes those library affiliates who are not members of ILA. E represents the logical set of non-library related people who are members of ILA. This group represents the smallest segment of the population, and in fact may be non-existent. Group F is made up of the general public, containing both users and non-users of libraries.

Although the groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive, parameters can be identified which distinguish between them. As resources permit, each group can be studied in turn or in conjunction with any or all other groups. These divisions serve only as a model for present speculation. Finalization of target populations can be completed after an examination of other studies and available methodologies has been completed.

Proposed Direction for Task Force #1

Consensus of the Task Force was that a feasible study begin with the ILA membership (groups A, C, E). It would be desirable to coordinate this study with a study of non-ILA members in the B, or possibly B and D,group in order to determine what might influence non-members to join ILA or why members drop out. Studies of users and non-users of libraries (group F) would be the most difficult due to geographic and demographic variables. Studies of group F could be best performed at the local or System level. A survey of groups A and B could indicate to what extemt activity is already occurring at the local level and the direction studies of group F should take. Although studies of the total library community should not ignore the library users and non-user, the magnitude of such a study precludes the inclusion of group F at this time.

SEARCH #1:

(NEEDS .OR. EDUCATIONAL NEEDS .OR. INFORMATION NEEDS .OR. RESEARCH NEEDS .OR. NEEDS ASSESSMENT)
.AND. (LIBRARIES .OR. BRANCH LIBRARIES .OR. COLLEGE LIBRARIES .OR. DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES .OR. FILM LIBRARIES .OR. NATIONAL LIBRARIES .OR. PUBLIC LIBRARIES .OR. REGIONAL LIBRARIES .OR. SCHOOL LIBRARIES .OR. SPECIAL LIBRARIES .OR. STATE LIBRARIES .OR. UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES .OR. JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARIES .OR. RESEARCH LIBRARIES)$

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SEARCH #2:

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SEARCH #3:

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.AND. (LIBRARIES .OR. BRANCH LIBRARIES .OR. COLLEGE LIBRARIES .OR. DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES .OR. FILM LIBRARIES .OR. NATIONAL LIBRARIES .OR. PUBLIC LIBRARIES .OR. REGIONAL LIBRARIES .OR. SCHOOL LIBRARIES .OR. SPECIAL LIBRARIES .OR. STATE LIBRARIES .OR. UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES .OR. JUNIOR COLLEGE LIBRARIES .OR. RESEARCH LIBRARIES)$

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ED 145843	ED 148304	ED 148339	ED 148345	ED 148346

SEARCH #3 continued:

ED 019098	ED 019758	ED 019976	ED 019986	ED 021565
ED 022484	ED 022488	ED 022489	ED 022490	ED 022502
ED 024423	ED 025275	ED 025281	ED 025292	ED 025295
ED 027907	ED 028788	ED 028792	ED 028807	ED 029168
ED 032084	ED 032096	ED 032447	ED 032511	ED 033730
ED 034567	ED 035423	ED 036301	ED 037221	ED 037228
ED 041604	ED 041606	ED 041613	ED 042467	ED 042473
ED 044126	ED 044133	ED 044136	ED 044139	ED 044153
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ED 046463	ED 046472	ED 046473	ED 047696	ED 047697
ED 048875	ED 048901	ED 049735	ED 049768	ED 049791
ED 051870	ED 053749	ED 053752	ED 053770	ED 053772
ED 055617	ED 055621	ED 055622	ED 055625	ED 055628
ED 056737	ED 058912	ED 059732	ED 060888	ED 060889
ED 065137	ED 065161	ED 065164	ED 066173	ED 066174
ED 068143	ED 068144	ED 068145	ED 069286	ED 072803
ED 075052	ED 076201	ED 076204	ED 076220	ED 077526
ED 077547	ED 077548	ED 077549	ED 077550	ED 081439
ED 084775	ED 086175	ED 086185	ED 086210	ED 086212
ED 087405	ED 087480	ED 087490	ED 088446	ED 088452
ED 089705	ED 089712	ED 089743	ED 089761	ED 089762
ED 090915	ED 090942	ED 090943	ED 090981	ED 092137
ED 093344	ED 094700	ED 094723	ED 094725	ED 094743
ED 095915	ED 095920	ED 096944	ED 096964	ED 097009
ED 098919	ED 098920	ED 098967	ED 098999	ED 100306
ED 103024	ED 103025	ED 104332	ED 104350	ED 104393
ED 104409	ED 104411	ED 104413	ED 105576	ED 105882
ED 110019	ED 110020	ED 110061	ED 110064	ED 111371
ED 112908	ED 112913	ED 112926	ED 112927	ED 112929
ED 115218	ED 115286	ED 115291	ED 115292	ED 115294
ED 118066	ED 118067	ED 118088	ED 119650	ED 119658
ED 119725	ED 119739	ED 121236	ED 121246	ED 121247
ED 121330	ED 121331	ED 121332	ED 122738	ED 124114
ED 124209	ED 125524	ED 125537	ED 125539	ED 125567
ED 129219	ED 129284	ED 129291	ED 129300	ED 130672
ED 134182	ED 134191	ED 134206	ED 134210	ED 135363
ED 139397	ED 139409	ED 139420	ED 140806	ED 140841
ED 143374	ED 144593	ED 144597	ED 144608	ED 145839
ED 148347	ED 148349	ED 148401	ED 148674	

SEARCH #3 continued:

NUMBER OF ACCESSION NUMBERS FOUND = 100

EJ 005379	EJ 005678	EJ 006191	EJ 006406	EJ 009226
EJ 024729	EJ 024739	EJ 024741	EJ 024765	EJ 025993
EJ 028711	EJ 035432	EJ 035441	EJ 039692	EJ 039718
EJ 047732	EJ 050824	EJ 052252	EJ 055511	EJ 056452
EJ 062388	EJ 063843	EJ 063844	EJ 065339	EJ 068061
EJ 076179	EJ 076773	EJ 076781	EJ 076789	EJ 079310
EJ 091565	EJ 094907	EJ 096594	EJ 096599	EJ 099824
EJ 101151	EJ 101177	EJ 101196	EJ 101210	EJ 102895
EJ 124586	EJ 124590	EJ 124596	EJ 126259	EJ 131371
EJ 151741	EJ 153995	EJ 162641	EJ 162649	EJ 164573

EJ 009634	EJ 010699	EJ 013707	EJ 016297	EJ 017243
EJ 027223	EJ 028236	EJ 028237	EJ 028238	EJ 028706
EJ 043027	EJ 043029	EJ 044156	EJ 045861	EJ 046326
EJ 059365	EJ 059366	EJ 060824	EJ 061861	EJ 062380
EJ 069039	EJ 070261	EJ 070878	EJ 073598	EJ 076178
EJ 080063	EJ 083155	EJ 084903	EJ 084906	EJ 086384
EJ 099828	EJ 099835	EJ 099853	EJ 101134	EJ 101141
EJ 106194	EJ 112908	EJ 117887	EJ 117889	EJ 121116
EJ 134793	EJ 139696	EJ 143240	EJ 146557	EJ 148555
EJ 168164	EJ 170242	EJ 170255	EJ 170256	EJ 172222

Appendix G

Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Department of Library Science
815 753 1735

October 5, 1978

Letter Sent to State Associations
Listed in the ALA Handbook of
Organizations, 1977/78.

The Illinois Library Association membership has recently voted to accept a proposed long range plan titled "The Illinois Direction." One of the key elements in this plan involves the appointment of a number of task forces to study the needs and objectives of the library community in Illinois.

Task Force #1 is charged with studying a variety of methods which ILA could use to identify the needs and aspirations of the total library community, with the ultimate purpose of assisting the community through ILA. Task Force #1 will produce a report describing the options considered, recommending one or more mechanisms and detailing the kinds of topics, questions, and research deemed necessary. The Task Force will also suggest a time schedule for the use of the recommended methods and attach an estimate of cost.

I would like to solicit your help in this venture. In your capacity as the present or past president of your state library association, are you aware of any needs assessment studies that have been conducted or authorized by either your association or some other organization, e.g., the state library? The studies need not have been limited to the membership of the state library association and may have been aimed at only a segment of the total library community, such as academic librarians, library trustees, school librarians, etc. Although we are not excluding the general public from a definition of the total library community, our present concern is with segments of the library community directly related to the functioning of libraries at all levels. We welcome any feedback, including references to specific studies, source documents, and opinions on the kinds of topics, questions, and research deemed necessary.

I realize this is a great deal to ask. However, we will be happy to share the results of this preliminary survey and the final report of Task Force #1 with you. Please call or write if you have any questions. My direct telephone number is (815) 753-0522. Messages may be left at (815) 753-1735.

I would appreciate a reply prior to the ILA annual meeting on October 25 so that the results of this survey can be incorporated into an interim report. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew G. Torok, Chairman
Task Force #1

:smb

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Five Major Methods of Determining Needs and Aspirations of the Total Library Community

I. Documents -- Survey of the Literature

By studying what has been previously done in the area of needs assessment, it may be possible to infer what the needs of the target population are. One major advantage to this method is that it is extremely inexpensive. The major disadvantage is that it is impossible to know what the needs of one community are by studying the needs of other communities.

It is necessary, however, to do a thorough literature search on needs assessment studies in order to provide a conceptual background for the present study. By learning what the needs of the other groups are, we will be better able to explore the needs of the target group.

II. Observation

This method can provide an assessment of the needs of the library community without the personal bias introduced by the subjects of the study. This method can show the overt needs of the observed population, but can in no way measure the covert needs of the people. Also, an adequate assessment of the overt needs of the people would entail an enormous number of man hours.

III. Experiment

This method is totally out of the question for several reasons. First, the planning of the experiment would have to be very careful so that it would measure what it is intended to measure. Second, it would have to be extremely complex, or consist of many small experiments, in order to get anywhere near a total picture of what the needs of the community are. Third, controlling conditions under which the experiment would be performed is probably impossible. Last, overt needs could be measured, but again, covert needs would remain hidden.

IV. Expert Opinion -- The Delphi Technique

By locating one or more experts in the field, it may be possible to assess the needs of the community. The problem here lies in locating the experts, and in making sure that they really know the answers to the questions.

V. Survey Research

Survey research is really a form of the Delphi Technique. It assumes that the experts are the people themselves and proceeds to ask them. It is usually expensive to implement and must be carefully planned if valid results are to be obtained, but if we assume that the people themselves are the best judges of their needs, it is the most feasible way to answer the question of what their needs are.

The major steps in the implementation of a survey are outlined below.

A. Determine what information is needed.
Before you can ask the questions, you need to know what questions to ask.

B. Preliminary Literature Survey
By learning what has been done in the past, we can be more aware of the possible areas to be explored. The literature can also provide clues to the kinds of questions to ask, appropriate phrasings, and how to implement the survey.

C. Construction of the Survey Instrument
The usual form which a survey takes is a questionnaire. It must be very carefully designed and worded so that the questions are free of ambiguity and measure what they are intended to measure.
Pretesting of the instrument is essential.

D. Identifying the Population to Be Surveyed
The population must be defined in order to determine who to sample, how many to sample, and how the sample is to be drawn.

E. Sample Design
The three most common sample designs are random, stratified random, and nonrandom.
1. Random -- if at all possible, this method should be implememted. It avoids bias, is most easily analyzed, and produces the most statistically accurate results.
2. Stratified Random -- When the population consists of relatively few of one type of respondent, e.g., library directors as opposed to school librarians, then proportionately more of the smaller group may be chosen in order to ensure an adequate number of respondents in that group. Extreme care must be taken with analysis of data from this type of design because virtually all statistical techniques are based on simple random sample.

3. Nonrandom -- This method introduces a bias into the survey, whether intentional or not. It will almost always produce inaccurate results.

F. Implementation of the Survey

Again, there are three major ways of implementing a survey: mail, in person, and by telephone.

1. Mail Surveys -- These are very inexpensive to implement but produce the lowest response rate. The questionnaire must be so carefully designed that the respondent will have no questions on how he is to answer or on what a particular word or question means.
2. In Person Surveys -- These are the most expensive but produce the best response. They are also probably the most accurate in their results.
3. Telephone Surveys -- These are less expensive that the in person survey, but do not usually as good a response rate as the in person survey. They are gaining wide acceptance because they are so much less expensive than in person surveys but produce much greater and more accurate results than mail surveys.

G. Analysis of Data Gathered from the Survey

Whatever statistical methods are used to analyze the data, it is necessary to make sure that they are applicable to the data at hand, and if other than simple random sampling methods are used, this must be considered in the analysis.